

### How did relations with Byzantium change the situation?

Relations with the Byzantine Empire had been much improved since the Second Crusade. King Baldwin III had married the Emperor Manuel's niece, Theodora, in 1158, and in the following year the combined armies of Byzantium, Jerusalem and Antioch marched on Aleppo, reinforcing the Byzantine overlordship of the Antioch rulers and forcing Nur ad-Din to allow an Orthodox patriarch in the city, although the crusaders failed to capture Aleppo. In 1167 King Amalric married Maria, another niece of Emperor Manuel, and in 1169 a joint Byzantine and crusader army attacked Damietta, in northern Egypt, but without success. The close alliance between Byzantium and Jerusalem was illustrated by the journey of King Amalric to Constantinople in 1171. This was something no previous king of Jerusalem had ever done. It also shows the crusaders' desperate need of help, and it is possible that Amalric acknowledged the overlordship of the Emperor in order to gain the support he needed to deal with Nur ad-Din.

Amalric died in 1174 and in 1180 Emperor Manuel, his close ally, also died. The crusader kingdom thus lost its chief supporter. Manuel left a young son, Alexius, who was governed by his mother, Maria. She continued pro-crusader diplomacy, but after 1184 Saladin made a treaty with Byzantium, leaving the Holy Land without Byzantine support.

### The regencies of Guy and Raymond

In 1180 a peace treaty was agreed with Saladin so that internal divisions within the kingdom could be healed. By 1183 Baldwin's leprosy was inflicting terrible agonies on the young man; he was blind and had lost the use of his hands and feet and was forced to appoint a regent, though he did not abdicate. The regent Baldwin chose was Guy, his brother-in-law. Guy was an outsider who had little experience of Outremer. Guy summoned the entire Christian forces from all over the kingdom and troops from Antioch and Tripoli, a total of some 17,000 men, to face a new threat from Saladin that summer. There was no battle and Saladin withdrew due to a lack of supplies. This appeared to be a success, but Guy's enemies persuaded Baldwin that there should have been a battle with Saladin to justify such a gathering of troops and destruction of crops, and Guy was removed as regent. Baldwin's young nephew, another Baldwin, was crowned co-king and by 1185 it was clear that Guy was well out of favour with Baldwin, who now wanted to annul Guy's marriage with Sibylla. He was close to death, and a strong leader was needed to act as regent, so once again Raymond of Tripoli was appointed, even though some barons distrusted him. In May 1185 Baldwin died, finished off by his leprosy at the age of 23. He was succeeded by his nephew, Baldwin V. Raymond, as regent, arranged a truce with Saladin, but in the summer of 1186 Baldwin V, aged nine, died.

### The downfall of Raymond and Guy's coronation

The conditions of Raymond's regency stipulated that on Baldwin V's premature death, a council of western leaders, including the pope and the rulers of England, France and Germany should decide which of Baldwin IV's sisters, Sibylla or Isabella, should succeed. Raymond was in the north, gathering his supporters, but in Jerusalem support for Sibylla was strong, though her husband, Guy, was less popular. The nobles said that they would accept her as queen if she divorced Guy. Sibylla agreed, but reserved the right to choose her new husband. The divorce went ahead and the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Heraclius, crowned her queen, asking her to choose her regent and future husband. She chose – Guy! – placing the crown on his head so that he could be anointed by the Patriarch. This charade had clearly been planned by Sibylla, Guy and the Patriarch. It fooled the nobles and above all, Raymond, who had argued that Sibylla's sister Isabella should be queen and her husband,

#### ACTIVITY

How far does the importance of Sibylla's marriage illustrate the problems of hereditary monarchy?

Think about how far Sibylla's importance underlines the inherent weakness in the hereditary monarchy of the crusader kingdom.



Humphrey of Toron, therefore the new king. Humphrey, however, offered his loyalty to Guy: Raymond had been totally outmanoeuvred. Worse still, it was rumoured that Raymond had done a deal with Saladin to gain his support for the throne.

### **How did the crisis of 1187 occur?**

The destruction of the crusader castle at Jacob's Ford demonstrated Saladin's might, but the annexation of Aleppo and Mosul in 1181–83 put a seal on his rise to power and successful uniting of the Muslim world. He was successfully encircling and increasingly threatening Outremer. The sharp decline in Baldwin IV's health was certainly to Saladin's advantage, but ultimately his greatest asset was the ability of the leaders of the crusader kingdom to bring about their own downfall.

### **Reynald's attack on the Muslim caravan (1187)**

The truce of 1186 with Saladin was abruptly shattered by the rash and violent actions of Reynald of Chatillon, who attacked a Muslim caravan that was travelling from Cairo to Damascus, killing merchants, traders and women. This gave Saladin the opportunity to invade the kingdom, first besieging Kerak, Reynald's castle in the Transjordan, and then raiding through Galilee towards Acre. In response, the military orders raised a force of 500 men and took on 7000 Muslims at the Springs of Cresson on 1 May. The Christian force met with total defeat: only four knights got out alive. This senseless massacre depleted the overstretched forces of Outremer even further. In June, Saladin gathered his main armies from Egypt, Aleppo and Syria. Years of careful consolidation and diplomacy had brought him men, money and tremendous prestige. He had built up a reputation as the true defender of Islam and enemy of the Christians: his time had come at last.

### **The crusaders' dilemma: why did they risk a battle?**

The Christians had a choice: to remain in the castles and walled towns and wait for Saladin's forces to run out of food whilst hoping that they themselves would get reinforcements from the West, or to march and confront Saladin in one great battle. The second option was extremely risky; the crusaders could not defend the towns and castles as well as field an effective army. If they lost the battle, they would lose the whole kingdom.

King Guy summoned the entire fighting force of Outremer, about 17,000 knights and men-at-arms, stripping the castle and town garrisons and using the treasure that had been sent by Henry II of England as his penance for the murder of Becket. Saladin's army numbered around 20,000 men; it was in his interest to force a decisive outcome and strike a massive blow for the cause of the jihad. He used the siege of Tiberias as bait, trapping Raymond of Tripoli's wife in the town on 2 July. However, Raymond, who had advised peace in 1183, counselled shadowing the enemy and waiting for them to go home, and Guy agreed to this.

### **Guy changes his mind: the fate of the kingdom is sealed**

Guy, an outsider and king only in his wife's name, was haunted by his failure to deal with Saladin in 1183 when he had not gone into battle and had instead lost his position as regent. On the night of 2 July, two men convinced him that this time he would have to go to battle. One of them was, predictably, Reynald of Chatillon; the other was Gerard de Ridefort, master of the Templars. Both were uncompromising anti-Muslims, but they were also opponents of Raymond. Gerard may have remembered the fact that as a young knight he had been promised marriage to an important

heiress in Tripoli, Lucia, who was Raymond's ward. Lucia had offered her weight in gold (63 kilograms) to gain her free choice in marriage and had chosen to marry a Pisan merchant instead of Gerard. Humiliated and filled with hatred of Raymond, Gerard joined the Templars. It was Guy and Gerard who had released Henry II's treasure, and now they had to justify that expenditure. Guy gave the order in the morning to march on Tiberias. Tiberias was 20 miles away on a road without water supplies, and Guy was playing straight into Saladin's hands.

### What happened at the Battle of Hattin?

On 3 July 1187, the Muslim army continually attacked the crusader army, their archers wheeling back and forth. The Christians suffered dreadfully in the midsummer heat and were severely depleted. The Muslims' supplies were easily transported from Lake Tiberias.

#### Sources

**B** Baha ad-Din, Saladin's biographer, writing in the early thirteenth century, describes the plight of the Christian army:

*They [the crusaders] were closely beset as in a noose, while still marching on as though being driven to a death that they could see before them, convinced of their doom and destruction and themselves aware that the following day they would be visiting their graves.*

**C** A local Frank, named Ernoul, writing soon after 1197, describes the battle scene:

*When the fires were lit and the smoke was great, the Saracens surrounded the host and shot their darts through the smoke and so wounded and killed men and horses. When the king saw the disadvantageous position the host was in, he called the master of the Temple and Prince Reynald and told them to give him their advice. They counselled him that he must fight the Saracens. When the king was aware that Saladin was coming against him he ordered the count of Tripoli to charge. The count and his division charged at a large squadron of Saracens. The Saracens parted and made a way through and let them pass; then, when they were in the middle of them, they surrounded them. After this division had been defeated*

*the anger of God was so great against the Christian host because of their sins that Saladin vanquished them quickly; between the hours of tierce and nones [i.e. between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.] he had won almost all the field. He captured the King, the Master of the Temple, Prince Reynald, Marquis Boniface, Aimery the constable, Humphrey of Toron, Hugh of Gibelet, Plivain, lord of Botron, and so many other barons and knights that it would take too long to give the names of all of them; the Holy Cross also was lost.*

**D** The defeat at Hattin. Imad ad-Din, writing in the 1190s, graphically describes the nature of medieval warfare:

*The plain was covered with prisoners and corpses, disclosed by the dust as it settled and victory became clear. The dead were scattered over the mountains and valleys, lying immobile on their sides. I passed by them and saw the limbs of the fallen cast naked on the field of battle, scattered in pieces over the site of the encounter, lacerated and disjointed, with heads cracked open, throats split, spines broken, necks shattered, feet in pieces, noses mutilated, extremities torn off, members dismembered, parts shredded, eyes gouged out ... the chests smashed, bodies cut in half, arms pulverised, lips shrivelled, foreheads pierced ...*

#### ACTIVITY

Using Sources B and C, assess how far the Battle of Hattin was won by the mistakes of the crusaders rather than the skilful tactics of Saladin.

The next day the crusaders planned to break out from the Muslim encirclement, but when the Muslims set the grass alight, the discomfort of the previous day and dehydration were now

extreme. The infantry scattered whilst Raymond charged the enemy, breaking through and escaping (some thought that Saladin allowed him to get away). The remaining crusaders retreated to the twin peaks known as the Horns of Hattin, where Guy pitched his tent and charged down at Saladin himself, in the hope of killing the Muslim leader and thus ending the battle. This gamble failed: the Muslims attacked and captured Guy, Reynald and many nobles, Templars and Hospitallers and the True Cross (a prized relic that the Christians carried into battle).

Wise and magnanimous though Saladin undoubtedly was, the Templar and Hospitaller knights captured at Hattin could expect no mercy, and it was clear that Saladin would give them none. He personally dispatched the hated Reynald before giving the order to execute the knights of the military orders. By contrast, King Guy was given a glass of iced sherbet and escorted into honourable captivity.

### Source

**E** Imad ad-Din, writing in the 1190s, describes the execution of the Templar and Hospitaller prisoners after Hattin:

*Saladin, his face joyful, was sitting on his dais; the unbelievers showed black despair, the troops were drawn up in their ranks, the emirs stood in double file. There were some who slashed and cut cleanly, and were thanked for it ... I saw how [they] killed unbelief to give life to Islam, and drove decisions through to their conclusion to satisfy the community of the faithful and cut down the enemies in the defence of friends!*

Saladin's victory was absolute. As a fellow king, Guy was treated with respect, but members of the military orders were all executed – something everyone expected – and the remaining nobles were sold into slavery. There was no mercy for Reynald, the most psychotic and murderous crusader: Saladin used a scimitar to sever his arm at the shoulder before his bodyguards hacked off his head.



**Figure 9.2** The Horns of Hattin today.

## The fall of Jerusalem

The crusader kingdom was now utterly exposed. Saladin's army marched through Tiberias, Nazareth, Acre, Caesarea and Jaffa, taking all the coastal towns except Tyre, which held out under the leadership of Conrad of Montferrat, brother of William Longsword. Saladin did not waste time in sieges; he simply moved on and isolated any towns that did not surrender immediately.

Jerusalem held out, but with only two knights and the civilian population its fall was only a matter of time. Heraclius agreed the city's surrender, and many Christians were ransomed if they could afford to pay, or enslaved if not. There was no mass slaughter as there had been when the crusaders captured the city in 1099, but the choices for the inhabitants were grim. Those who could not afford to pay the ransom became slaves (including children) and mass rape of the women was not prevented. No Latin (western Christian) was allowed to remain, though some eastern Christians could. Christian churches were converted into mosques or stables, and convents or teaching colleges were stripped of their valuables. Saladin installed a *minbar* (pulpit) in the Temple Church which had been the al-Aqsa mosque before 1099, the site of Muhammad's ascension to heaven. The church of the Holy Sepulchre was spared (again, in contrast to the destruction and slaughter of 1099) and Christian pilgrims were allowed to visit on payment of a fee.

### Source

**F** Imad ad-Din, writing in the 1190s, describes the conquering Muslims' treatment of Jerusalem and its inhabitants:

*... the churches and the altars became stables for the horses and cattle and places of debauchery, drinking and singing. Added to which was the shame and derision of the monks, of noblewomen, of pure nuns who were delivered into impurity with all sorts of people, of boys and girls who became Turkish slaves and were dispersed to the four corners of earth.*

Saladin was careful to ensure that he dealt with the Christians in Jerusalem harshly, so as to confirm his position as leader of the jihad. Jerusalem had become more significant as a holy city of Islam over the decades since 1099, and Saladin used its capture to demonstrate his power to the Arab world.

### ACTIVITY

- 1 Use Sources D–F to assess how the Muslim writers regarded the defeated crusaders.
- 2 To what extent did Saladin exploit the idea of the jihad to further his own ends?

More crusader castles surrendered in 1188, 1189 and 1190 but those in northern Syria, including the great Hospitaller fortress of Krak des Chevaliers, held out. And, most significantly for the beleaguered Christians, the port of Tyre remained in crusader hands, providing a foothold for the armies of the Third Crusade.

**Source**

Ⓒ From Jean Richard, *The Crusades c1071–c1291*:

*The westerners had frequent experience of the opposition between their own intentions – to earn their remission by fighting in God's service – and those of the Franks of the East, who did not hesitate to make truces with the Muslims and refused to break them so as to give their allies an opportunity to fight, thereby rendering vain the sacrifices they had made.*

Ⓓ From T. Jones & A. Ereira, *Crusades*

*It was unfortunate for the kingdom that the twenty-one-year-old King Baldwin IV was a leper. In recent years his terrible disease had become so bad that he had been persuaded to hand over the reins of the kingdom to his sister Sibylla's husband, Guy de Lusignan – a man 'unequal to the burden both in force and in wisdom' in the rather jaundiced view of William of Tyre.*

**ACTIVITY**

From your reading of the Conclusion and Sources G and H above, rank the causes of the collapse of the kingdom in order, with the most important at the top.

**Conclusion**

The downfall of Outremer, the crusader kingdom established after 1100, was total. It was never recovered even partly, despite many more crusades from the West. A Christian army was not to enter Jerusalem again for over 700 years.

The collapse of the kingdom was by no means inevitable, even in 1186, after years of a diseased and feeble king embroiled in disputes with leading nobles over his regency and succession. Saladin was defeated by crusader armies in 1177 and 1182; Reynald's daring raid down the Red Sea in 1183 had damaged Saladin's prestige as defender of the Islamic faith. The campaign of 1183 had ended inconclusively.

Long-term and short-term factors did however contribute to the final collapse:

*Long-term:*

- Nur ad-Din's efforts in building the jihad and uniting Egypt with Syria (1146–74) paid off under Saladin, but this still took ten years for him to achieve (1174–84).
- The constant appeals to the West failed to gather enough support and outside help was diminished further by the breakdown of relations with Byzantium.

*Short-term:*

- The marriage of Guy and Sibylla triggered faction and dissent among the nobles which was never resolved, leaving the leadership of the kingdom in 1187 simmering with distrust and resentment.
- Reynald of Chatillon was out of control; a strong king, sure of his authority, would have dealt with him.
- The decision to march out to Tiberias was disastrous; Guy made the choice based on advice from the 'hawks' and to slay his own demons because of his insecure position as king.

The reign of Baldwin IV, the leper-king, and his short-lived young nephew, Baldwin V, were not necessarily the cause of the downfall in 1187, although Baldwin IV's decision to allow Guy to marry his sister was certainly the wrong choice. The continual shortage of men was not in the end an issue, because Saladin's advantage of 5000 troops was not overwhelming. Guy could have chosen to shadow Saladin as he did in 1183, waited for him to retire and executed Reynald. Perhaps the right moment might never have come again for Saladin, who would not have had the excuse he had in 1187 or the support from the Islamic world.

However, the fateful decision was made and Jerusalem was lost. It would now take the might of the western world, after so many years of prevarication, to attempt to regain the kingdom of Jerusalem in the Third Crusade.

### Review questions

- 1 To what extent was the failure of the West to send aid a result of political and not religious motivation?
- 2 To what extent did the crusaders' mistakes rather than Saladin's tactics ensure Saladin's victory at Hattin?
- 3 How far do you agree that the fall of Jerusalem was due more to long-term than short-term factors?